

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please amend the drawings with the attachment replacement sheet. More particularly, Figure 2 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error wherein reference numerals "38" have been changed to --37-- and reference numerals 38 and their lead lines have been relocated to conform the same to the specification. No new matter has been added.

REMARKS

In response to Office Action dated August 16, 2005, the applicant submitted a response dated November 16, 2005. Thereafter, the applicant received a Notice of Non-compliant Amendment dated February 1, 2006 indicating the facsimile transmission of the response received at the United States Patent and Trademark Office had poor resolution, and the Examiner requested the applicant to distinguish the newly submitted claims over the reference cited. The present response is being submitted in response to the Office Action dated August 16, 2005 and the Notice of Non-compliant Amendment dated February 1, 2006.

Applicant respectfully submits that the general comments with regard to independent claim 1 and Ito et al. were applicable to new claims 31-36 as they were mentioned in the paragraph preceding the arguments previously provided with regard to Ito et al. Nevertheless, applicant provides herewith arguments why newly submitted claims 31-36 are allowable over the reference cited as well as a complete copy of the previous response.

Claims 1-30 were presented for examination. Claims 12, 14, 15 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 and claims 1-11, 13, 16, and 18-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Ito et al. (U. S. Patent No. 4,691,659).

Applicant respectfully traverses the 112 rejections as the specification, as filed, and U.S. patent application serial no. 10/643,512, incorporated by reference, provide sufficient written description for the limitations of claims 12, 14, 15 and 17. Nevertheless and in the instant amendment claims 3, 4, 6, 8-17 and 19-30 have been canceled. Accordingly, applicant submits that the rejections to claims 3, 4, 6, 8-17 and 19-30 are now moot.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 have been amended to more succinctly describe the invention. Additionally, applicant has added new claims 31-36. Support for the foregoing amendments is found in the specification, original claims, and Figures 1-8. Applicant further submits that no new matter has been introduced by the foregoing

amendments. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Referring to independent claim 1, as amended, the claim recites a watercraft steer-by-wire control system having at least the following limitations: “a steering input device configured for rotational movement about a moveable axis of the steering input device, the moveable axis extending longitudinally through the steering input device, . . . a rudder control system in operable communication with the steering input device, wherein rotational movement of the steering input device about the moveable axis induces the rudder control system to move a rudder.”

“A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” *Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Moreover, “[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the * * * claim.” *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

To anticipate a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102, a single source must contain all of the elements of the claim. *Lewmar Marine Inc. v. Barient, Inc.*, 827 F.2d 744, 747, 3 U.S.P.Q.2d 1766, 1768 (Fed. Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 484 U.S. 1007 (1988).

Referring to Ito et al., the reference is directed to a joystick ship steering apparatus. In particular, Ito et al. is directed to a joystick that can move about x and y-axes, but the joystick does not rotate about an axis extending longitudinally through the joystick for controlling a rudder. Therefore, Ito et al. does not teach “a steering input device configured for rotational movement about a moveable axis of the steering input device, the moveable axis extending longitudinally through the steering input device, . . . a rudder control system in operable communication with the steering input device, wherein rotational movement of the steering input device about the moveable axis induces the rudder control system to move a rudder,” as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, because Ito et al. does not teach each and every limitation of amended claim 1 as discussed above, applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable over Ito et al.

Since claims 2, 5, 7, 18 and 31-34 all depend from claim 1, applicant respectfully submits that claims 2, 5, 7, 18 and 31-34 are also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Referring to independent claim 35, the claim recites steer-by-wire control system for a watercraft having at least the following limitations: “a steering input device having a shaft configured for rotational movement about a longitudinal axis of the shaft, . . . a rudder control system operably communicating with the steering input device, the rudder control system configured to move the rudder in response to rotational movement of the shaft about the longitudinal axis.”

Referring to Ito et al., the reference is directed to a joystick that can move about x and y-axes, but the joystick does not rotate about a longitudinal axis of the joystick for controlling a rudder. Therefore, Ito et al. does not teach “a steering input device having a shaft configured for rotational movement about a longitudinal axis of the shaft, . . . a rudder control system operably communicating with the steering input device, the rudder control system configured to move the rudder in response to rotational movement of the shaft about the longitudinal axis,” as recited in claim 35.

Accordingly, because Ito et al. does not teach each and every limitation of claim 35 as discussed above, applicant respectfully submits that claim 35 is allowable over Ito et al.

Referring to independent claim 36, the claim recites a method for maneuvering a watercraft utilizing a steer-by-wire control system having at least the following limitations: “rotating the shaft a first rotational distance about the longitudinal axis of the shaft; and controlling an operational position of the rudder based on the first rotational distance.”

Referring to Ito et al., the reference is directed to a joystick that can move about x and y-axes, but the joystick does not rotate about a longitudinal axis of the joystick for controlling a rudder. Therefore, Ito et al. does not teach "rotating the shaft a first rotational distance about the longitudinal axis of the shaft; and controlling an operational position of the rudder based on the first rotational distance," as recited in claim 36.

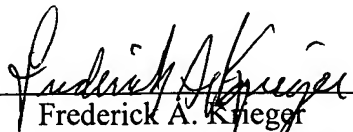
Accordingly, because Ito et al. does not teach each and every limitation of claim 36 as discussed above, applicant respectfully submits that claim 36 is allowable over Ito et al.

It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action dated August 16, 2005 and the Notice of Non-compliant Amendment dated February 1, 2006 and that the claims herein should now be allowable. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are requested.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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